



The Memory Assessment Service

Information for patients -
why you have been referred



*Supporting you
on your journey...*

What is the Memory Assessment Service?

The Memory Assessment Service (MAS) is a service for people over 18 who are having problems with their memory and/or other cognitive difficulties such as with language or attention and/or personality/behaviour changes.

You have been referred to the Memory Assessment Service because you, your family and/or your GP have noticed that you are having some of these difficulties. Your GP should have completed or will complete some blood tests to rule out other causes for these problems.

What are the different causes of memory and/or cognitive problems?

There are many different reasons why people start to have problems with their memory and/or other cognitive abilities. Tiredness, work and life-related stresses, depression, excessive alcohol consumption, physical health problems and the side effects of some medications can all cause people to have problems with their memories/cognitive abilities.

Having memory and/or cognitive problems can be because of a condition called dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is not one single illness but rather a name for a collection of symptoms, which are caused by changes in how the brain is working. There are many different types of dementia; the most common is Alzheimer's disease and the second most common type is vascular dementia. We will discuss the possibility of dementia with you and you will be informed of any diagnosis in accordance with your wishes.

What happens next?

Once we have received the referral from your GP, we will contact you to offer you an appointment to see one of our senior practitioners (a nurse or occupational therapist by background).

The assessment process

There are four components to the standard assessment process. These are:

- Pre-assessment counselling to ensure you understand the reason for the assessment, the possible outcomes and most importantly that you agree to continue with the assessment.
- The assessment, which involves asking you, and also someone who knows you well, a lot of questions about your current memory/cognitive problems and how these affect you in everyday life. We usually complete a short paper and pencil test with you and we may refer you for a brain scan.
- Feedback of the assessment outcome in accordance with your wishes.
- Support planning, where we work with you and your family to develop a plan that identifies appropriate support systems and interventions for both you and your family, ensuring that you continue to live your life well whatever the reason for your memory/cognitive problems.

The benefits of having an assessment in the Memory Assessment Service

- You will get an accurate and timely explanation and/or diagnosis of your memory/cognitive problems.
- Treatment with anti-dementia drugs, if appropriate.
- Access to evidence-based non-medical interventions.
- Access to the dementia adviser service for information and signposting.
- Access to support/psychoeducation groups for family carers.
- Participation in relevant research studies.
- Information on affairs management e.g. power of attorney.
- Access to support services and benefits.

Where to go for further information

If you would like any further information about memory/cognitive problems or dementia or need some support or advice, you can contact:

Alzheimer's Society National Helpline

Tel: 0300 222 1122

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Admiral Nursing Direct

Tel: 0845 257 9406

Email: direct@dementiauk.org

www.bsmhft.nhs.uk

Main switchboard: 0121 301 0000